

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A window assembly, comprising:

a fixed member;

a sliding window that is slidably movable relative to said fixed member;

a catch housing secured to the fixed member;

a latch housing secured to the slideable window; and,

a latch assembly movably secured to said latch housing and releasably secured to said catch housing, said latch assembly comprising:

a latch arm, said latch arm being pivotally secured to said latch housing and being biased into engagement with said catch housing; and,

a latch actuator, said latch actuator being movable to pivot said latch arm out of engagement with said catch housing and thereby permit said sliding window to be slidably moved away from said fixed window.

2. The window assembly according to claim 1, wherein said latch actuator is slidably secured to said latch housing and is movable relatively toward and away from said catch housing.

3. The window assembly according to claim 1, wherein said latch arm extends from said latch housing toward said catch housing.

4. The window assembly according to claim 2, wherein said latch arm extends from said latch housing toward said catch housing.

5. The window assembly according to claim 1, wherein said latch arm is a first latch arm and said latch assembly further includes a second latch arm, each of said first and second latch arms including a first, actuated end and a second, latching end, said latching end being adapted to releasably engage said catch housing and wherein said actuated ends are engaged by said actuator to move said latching ends out of engagement with said catch housing.

6. The window assembly according to claim 5, wherein said catch housing includes a rear wall secured to said fixed member, a front wall, an upper wall, and a lower wall, and wherein said front, rear, upper, and lower walls cooperate to define an end opening through which the latch arms extend.

7. The window assembly according to claim 6, wherein said upper and lower walls define slotted openings that receive the latch arms' second, latching ends.

8. The window assembly according to claim 7, wherein said latch actuator is slidably secured to said latch housing and is movable relatively toward and away from said catch housing.

9. The window assembly according to claim 8, further comprising a biasing spring associated with said latch arms and serving to bias said latch arms' second, latching ends into engagement with said catch housing.

10. The window assembly according to claim 9, wherein each of said latch arms further includes a pivot pin that is received in said latch housing, said pivot pin defining an axis about which said larch arm rotates.

11. The window assembly according to claim 10, wherein said latch housing includes rails that guide the latch actuator as the latch actuator is slidably moved.

12. A latch assembly for a slidable window, comprising:
a catch housing adapted to be secured to stationary member;
a latch housing adapted to be secured to the slidable window; and,
a latch assembly, said latch assembly being received within said latch housing and being releasably secured to said catch housing, said latch assembly comprising:
a latch arm, said latch arm having a first, actuated end, an elongated body portion, and a second, latching end, wherein said actuated end is received within said latch housing, said body portion projects from said latch housing, and said latching end is disposed outside of said latch housing, said latch arm being pivotally secured to said latch housing and being biased so as urge said latching end into engagement with said catch housing; and,

a latch actuator, said latch actuator being secured to said latch housing and slidably movable, in a direction relatively away from said catch housing, against said latch arm's actuated end so as to pivot the latch arm's latching end out of engagement with said catch housing and thereby release said sliding from said fixed window.

13. The latch assembly according to claim 12, wherein said latch arm is a first latch arm and said latch assembly further comprises a second latch arm.

14. The latch assembly according to claim 13, wherein said catch housing includes a rear wall secured to said fixed member, a front wall, an upper wall, a lower wall, and an end wall, and wherein said front, rear, upper, and lower walls cooperate to define an end opening through which the first and second latch arms extend.

15. The latch assembly according to claim 14, wherein said upper and lower walls define slotted openings that receive the latch arms' latching ends.

16. The latch assembly according to claim 15, further comprising a biasing spring associated with said latch arms and serving to bias said latch arms' second, latching ends into engagement with said catch housing.

17. The latch assembly according to claim 16, wherein each of said latch arms further comprises a pivot pin that is received in said latch housing, said pivot pin defining an axis about which said latch arm rotates.

18. A method for operating a latch system for a sliding window, said sliding window being laterally movable between a closed position adjacent a fixed member and an open position spaced from said fixed member, said latch system including a latch housing affixed to said sliding window, a catch housing affixed to said fixed member, and a latch assembly, said latch assembly being operable to releasably secure said latch housing to said catch housing and including a latch arm and an actuator, said latch arm having a first, actuated end and a second, latching end that are interconnected by an elongated body portion, said actuated end being received within said latch housing while said elongated body portion projects from said latch housing such that said latching end is disposed outside of said latch housing, said actuator being slidably secured to said latch housing and movable laterally relative to said latch housing and said catch housing and against said latch arm actuated end so as to move said latch arm latching end out of engagement with said catch housing, wherein:

when said latch arm latching end is engaged with said catch housing, comprising the sequential steps of:

- a) applying lateral force to said actuator and thereby causing said actuator to move laterally away from said catch housing while said latch housing remains stationary;
- b) engaging said actuator with the latch arm's actuated end;

- c) pivoting said latch arm about an axis so as to move said latching end out of engagement with said catch housing; and,
- d) applying further lateral force to said actuator so as to move said actuator, said latch housing, and said window laterally away from said fixed member.

19. The method according to claim 18, wherein, when said latch arm latching end is disengaged from said catch housing, comprising the sequential steps of:

- e) applying force to said actuator and thereby causing said actuator to move laterally toward said catch housing while said latch housing remains stationary;
- f) applying further force to said actuator and thereby causing said actuator and said latch housing to move laterally toward said catch housing;
- g) engaging the latch arm's latching end with said catch housing and thereby causing said latching end to slide over said catch housing;
- h) snapping the latch arm's latching end into an opening formed in said catch housing to thereby engage said latching end with said catch housing.